

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 DRC-01

/076 W

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R 211733Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0542

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, UK, EI

SUBJECT. TUC INTERVENTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND BACK TO
WORK MOVEMENTS ENDS IN FAILURE

1. TUC GENERAL SECRETARY LEN MURRAY WAS COMPLETELY
REBUFFED TODAY (MAY 21) IN HIS PERSONAL EFFORTS TO GET
BELFAST PROTESTANTS TO END THEIR STRIKE, NOW IN ITS
SEVENTH DAY.

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2. THE TUC LEADER WAS REPORTEDLY ATTACKED BY WHAT NEWS

REPORTS DESCRIBED AS "SCREAMING WOMEN" AND OTHERS WHO BROKE THROUGH SECURITY LINES, BUT HE DOGGEDLY CONTINUED TO LEAD A FEW HUNDRED BACK-TO-WORKERS ON THEIR MARCH TO THE DOCK AREAS, WHERE DEMONSTRATORS WERE SAID TO OUTNUMBER MARCHERS. ANOTHER MARCH - TO THE CASTLEREAGH INDUSTRIAL ESTATE ON THE CITY OUTSKIRTS - WAS ALSO A SPECTACULAR FAILURE.

3. ALTHOUGH MURRAY -- WHO HAS SINCE RETURNED TO LONDON -- VOWED TO TRY AGAIN, IT WAS CLEAR THAT HIS INTERVENTION WAS TOTALLY UNSUCCESSFUL. THE MURRAY INITIATIVE WAS IN SUPPORT OF TUC-AFFILIATED TRADE UNIONS IN BELFAST WHICH HAD STRONGLY OPPOSED THE STRIKE CALLED BY UNOFFICIAL ULSTER WORKERS COUNCIL, A GROUP OF PROTESTANT MILITANTS. (THE UWC CLAIMED TO REPRESENT THE PROTESTANT WORKFORCE IN DEMANDING NEW ELECTIONS IN THE PROVINCE.)

4. MURRAY HAS SINCE CHARGED THAT THE BACK-TO-WORK MOVEMENT FAILED BECAUSE OF INTIMIDATION BY THE ULSTER MILITANTS, WHO IN FACT BLOCKADED THE ROADS IN NORTHERN IRELAND HIJACKED CARS AND TRUCKS AND TOOK OTHER ACTIONS TO INSURE THAT THE STRIKE CONTINUED. HOWEVER, WORKING LEVEL BRITISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE ADMITTED TO US THAT THEY CONSIDER TUC INTERVENTION A VERY GENUINE ERROR OF JUDGMENT. IN RETROSPECT, THIS SEEMS TO BE THE CASE. (THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL IS EXPECTED TO ISSUE A STATEMENT ON THE AFFAIR TOMORROW.)

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NORTHERN IRELAND, CIVIL DISORDERS, LABOR STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LONDON06342
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740126-1012
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740531/aaaabaxo.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 APR 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <12 JUN 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TUC INTERVENTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND BACK TO WORK MOVEMENTS ENDS IN FAILURE
TAGS: ELAB, UK, EI, TUC, (MURRAY, LEN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005